



Metro

Board Report

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

File #: 2018-0360, **File Type:** Project

Agenda Number: 25.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE JUNE 20, 2018

SUBJECT: ARTS DISTRICT/6TH STREET STATION

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to enter into a funding agreement with the City of Los Angeles to undertake pre-design activities, prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and conduct public engagement for a potential Arts District/6th Street Station for an amount of \$500,000.

ISSUE

On May 15, 2018, the Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee approved a motion (Attachment A) to authorize the transfer of \$500,000 to Metro for “project expenditures associated with the environmental clearance and pre-design activities of the Arts District/6th Street Metro Station”. A vicinity map of the Arts District/6th Street Station is in Attachment B. Final action on the City’s proposed appropriation is tentatively scheduled for June 19 or 20, 2018.

To receive and administer these funds, Metro will need to enter into a funding agreement with City of Los Angeles prior to initiating pre-design study, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and public engagement. Metro will be the lead agency, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). All costs, including additional costs, will be the responsibility of the City of Los Angeles. These additional costs may include, but are not limited to, advanced engineering design, additional work on technical studies, and responses to comments on the Draft EIR and public engagement direct costs.

The Arts District/6th Street Station is not in the financially constrained Long Range Transportation Plan. Conducting this work does not commit Metro to funding and delivering the Arts District/6th Street Station and extension of heavy rail transit to it.

BACKGROUND

In January 2017 the Metro Board passed a motion directing staff to “initiate a holistic assessment of Metro’s long-term needs at Division 20 and accommodation of future Arts District station access” (Attachment C). In May 2017, this assessment was presented to the Metro Board, including

a preferred location for a potential new heavy rail station serving the Arts District to be located at 6th Street instead of an alternative site at 3rd Street. A Draft EIR was then prepared for the Division 20 Portal Widening and Expansion Project and public hearings were held in March/April 2018. Design of the Division 20 Portal Widening and Turnback Facility Project has completed Preliminary (30%) Design and is now nearing completion of 60% design. The design is following the direction to not preclude a future Arts District/6th Street Metro Station. Metro is now preparing the Final EIR for the Division 20 project.

The West Santa Ana Branch Updated Northern Alignment Options Screening Report considered an option for Light Rail Transit to connect to Heavy Rail Transit at a potential Arts District/6th Street. However, on May 24, 2018, the Metro Board did not carry forward that alternative as part of the West Santa Ana Branch project. As a result, the potential Arts District/6th Street Station can be studied and reviewed as a separate project since it has independent utility.

DISCUSSION

The funding agreement with the City of Los Angeles will cover an environmental report, and the development of a station design including related tracks and platforms, vertical circulation elements and linkages to adjacent private development and the 6th Street Bridge and Arts Park. Any right-of-way requirements that could involve property owners or railroad operators (BNSF, Amtrak and Metrolink) will be identified. Very close development coordination will also be required between the Arts District/6th Street Station and Metro's Maintenance of Way Building, which is currently under construction. Coordination with the LA River Bike Path Gap Closure project, a recently awarded contract, as well as the California High Speed Rail Authority will also be needed. The Federal Transit Administration will also be consulted.

The Arts District/6th Street Station and heavy rail extension to it are not currently included in Metro's adopted Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or unconstrained project list. Metro has submitted this project for inclusion in the Southern California Association of Government's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Strategic Project list (fiscally unconstrained/unfunded), pursuant to prior Board action, and it is currently awaiting approval.

The City of Los Angeles' proposed Downtown Los Angeles Community Plan Updates (DTLA 2040; <https://www.dtl2040.org/>) clearly envisions a transit-oriented community within the Arts District and adjacent areas, along with existing land use patterns. The City's new 6th Street viaduct, which is presently being constructed, is designed to improve the connection by pedestrians, bicyclists, buses and automobiles from communities to the east to downtown-including the Arts District- which enhances access to opportunity by communities that were significantly constrained when the freeway network was built decades ago.

The confluence of changing land use patterns and mobility opportunities suggests there is merit in studying this potential project. By doing so, Metro's many public and private partners will have a clearer, conceptual understanding of what the project would be, its timeline and the cost. Metro's recently-adopted Equity Platform Framework will guide the process for studying and evaluating a potential Arts District/6th Street Station.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

There is no impact to the safety of our customers and/or employees because this is an authorization to conduct administrative and study work.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Impact to Budget

This funding agreement does not create direct costs to Metro and does not require amendments to the adopted budget.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could decline to authorize the CEO to enter into a funding agreement for this potential station and not authorize staff to conduct the associated work. Pre-design activities, preparation of an EIR and public engagement is consistent with Board directives to not-preclude a future Arts District/6th Street Station and to design improvements in Division 20 that will accommodate such a station at the Arts District/6th Street location. Funding by the City of Los Angeles enables Metro to evaluate a potential project-without committing to it-when the resources would not otherwise be available to do so.

.Next Steps

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, staff will work with the City of Los Angeles to execute a funding agreement and will initiate the procurement of consultant services to prepare the EIR, pre-design services and community outreach.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee Motion, May 15, 2018

Attachment B - Arts District/6th Street Station Vicinity Map

Attachment C - Metro Board Motion, January 2017

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